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SUBJECT: FY 2010 RENEWAL OF DISASTER DECLARATION FOR  
FLOODING IN MAURITANIA

REF: A. A) NOUAKCHOTT 000574  
B) NOUAKCHOTT 00567

**11. (U) Summary.** On September 9, 2009, Post declared a disaster due to the effects of severe flooding in the city of Rosso and surrounding areas in southern Mauritania. (Ref A). In response, the USG has provided USG 25,100 to UNICEF from the International Disaster Assistance Account for the construction of latrines and sanitation programs in the displaced persons camp PK7 in Rosso. OFDA gave an additional USD 30,000 from a previous UNICEF regional donation to procure water and sanitation supplies in southern Mauritania. Continued rains and the lack of infrastructure in southern Mauritania has led to a prolonged stay of more than 5,000 families in the displaced persons camp PK7 and local schools in Rosso. Initial reports indicate that further actions will be needed to meet the needs of those individuals in the displaced persons camps and to assist the local populations involved in the agricultural sector to allow for proper preparations for the coming growing season. End summary.

#### **12. (U) Current Humanitarian Conditions**

Post visited the displaced persons camp of PK7 with representatives from UNICEF and USAID/WA to evaluate the situation. In addition to those staying in camps, it is estimate that 1000 displaced families in and around Rosso are occupying government run schools until they can rebuild or return to their homes. There remain problems with lighting and water sanitation in the camps in Rosso. If additional rains continue there is an acute risk of additional flooding as water levels have receded somewhat, but the rivers remain precariously close to flooding stages.

#### **13. (U) Potential Assistance**

Many schools in Mauritania have been housing displaced families. UNICEF Mauritania has received approval from the GIRM's Minister of Education to proceed with a program to rehabilitate schools, to include cleaning of outdoor recreation areas, sanitation of the buildings and resupplying the schools with the necessary equipment so they may resume their proper academic functions. The Minister of Education indicated there are needs in the schools of Rosso as well as four schools in Nouakchott, which were impacted by the flooding. There may also be additional need to support the agricultural capacity of the southern region as residents begin to prepare for the off-season agricultural planting period. Planting during the current off-season is

particularly critical because none of the major irrigated land tracts in the south were prepared for planting due to the Mauritanian political crisis earlier this year. The floods may present an opportunity for a more bountiful agricultural season, but only if assistance can be provided to replace stocks of seed, fencing and other products used in the agricultural sector, which were destroyed in the floods.

UNICEF has not yet provided a detailed plan for their assistance projects, as they are still in discussions with the GIRM, but Post determines it is necessary to renew the disaster declaration for FY 2010 to support the assistance programs which will be needed to address the needs of the displaced populations in southern Mauritania.

HANKINS